



SENTENCING IN WISCONSIN

Snapshots of Information on Wisconsin Sentencing

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Recent Sentencing-Related Books, Part II

Michael Connelly, Ph.D., Executive Director

In the previous snapshot we presented brief summaries of four sentencing-related books currently available in bookstores or quickly by order. The following are the remaining books to be examined.

Laub, John H., and Sampson, Robert J. Shared Beginnings, Divergent Lives: Delinquent Boys to Age 70. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (2003)

Laub and Sampson are the leading exponents of the “crime in the life course” research, which currently offers the best counterpoint to traditional statistical analysis of present data. Reanalyzing decades-old data on juveniles in the 1930s and 1940s, they have tracked offenders who stopped and those who continued and looked for the variables associated with each. Overall, they have found that offenders who “desisted” had stronger structural routines and ties to their families and communities, particularly for those married. A side point, their research also has indicated that, of offenders matched on most variables and committing similar offenses, those who went to prison had longer and more productive criminal careers than those who received probation. In this book, they have reconnected with available offenders, now as old as 70, from the original study to show that childhood risk factors indeed continue to impact offender behavior past the juvenile years and into adulthood.

Maruna, Shadd. Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild Their Lives. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. (2001)

Maruna is one of the leading experts in offender “desistance,” a topic given life by Laub and Sampson’s work (above). In this study of offenders who stopped, who continued, and who shifted back and forth in Liverpool, Maruna emphasizes the “narratives” that offenders use to justify their actions. With several case studies, he illustrates the ways that these narratives flow into behavior and stresses that the key to reforming offender behavior positively and effecting successful reentry into their communities may be to work on changing these narratives. A good example of the value of hearing offenders describe their criminality directly, this book may not offer new insights into offenders’ behavior for experienced practitioners but does provide a new structure for interpreting their actions and how to deal with them. [Articles on desistance from some of the leading researchers can be found in Maruna and Russ Immarigeon, eds., *After Crime and Punishment: Pathways to Offender Reintegration*, Portland, OR: Willan Publishing, 2004.]

Shaftoe, Henry. Crime Prevention: Facts, Fallacies and the Future. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. (2004)

A rarely implemented or studied field of criminal justice, crime prevention is thoroughly presented and analyzed in Shaftoe's book. While British in orientation, the work broadly and generally examines available operations and research in the field to update readers on what works and how it should supplement traditional efforts of after-the-crime law enforcement and corrections. The book describes existing criminological theories, crime control models, cross-national efforts, and the successes and failures of the three topics in a quick and easily readable fashion. It also provides a similarly interesting look at the possibilities of using design and environment to structure crime out of communities and at the future of crime control and prevention.

Tonry, Michael, ed. The Future of Imprisonment. New York: Oxford University Press. (2004)

The editor, perhaps the leading authority on sentencing policy for the last two decades, has brought together some of the best-known researchers in the field to discuss topics for consideration for any future sentencing policy decisions. Authors include Alfred Blumstein, Richard Frase, Marc Miller, and Kevin Reitz, and topics cover the proper amount of imprisonment to achieve sentencing goals, risk management of violent and other offenders, prisoners' rights and prison reform, and reforming sentencing through sentencing information systems. The range of authors provides a range of styles, and readers may find some topics more interesting or useful than others. The book reflects current academic thinking on the effective and appropriate use of prisons today and will be valuable to readers concerned with the topic. [A well-known and still available book looking at the "past" of imprisonment is Norval Morris and David J.

Rothman, eds., *The Oxford History of the Prison: The Practice of Punishment in Western Society*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.]

The Wisconsin Sentencing Commission periodically publishes "Sentencing in Wisconsin" to provide the public, state courts, and policymakers data on state sentencing practices. For other publications, or more information about the Commission, see its website, <http://wsc.wi.gov>